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Feminization of Global Consumption: a Movement Toward Equity; Explanation and Initial Research Agenda

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The objective of this manuscript is to explore the role of feminine and masculine values and their bearing on consumption in the global marketplace. Limited research exists in the feminine values and feminism in marketing (e.g., Bristor and Fischer 1993; Costa 1994; Hirschman 1993; Palan 2001; Stern 1993). To accomplish this objective we begin with research questions and discussion of cultural value systems and their components. We illustrate how a nation's value system shapes consumption. We seek to discuss and investigate a trend among consumers to spend in ways that support their values of equity for consumers and producers (Ray and Anderson 2000).

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Feminization of Global Consumption: A Movement toward Equity: Explanation and Initial Research Agenda

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Introduction

The objective of this manuscript is to explore the role of feminine and masculine values and their bearing on consumption in the global marketplace. Limited research exists in the feminine values and feminism in marketing (e.g., Bristor and Fischer 1993; Costa 1994; Hirschman 1993; Palan 2001; Stern 1993). To accomplish this objective we begin with research questions and discussion of cultural value systems and their components. We illustrate how a nation's value system shapes consumption. We seek to discuss and investigate a trend among consumers to spend in ways that support their values of *equity* for consumers and producers (Ray and Anderson 2000).

Research Questions

Underpinning the primary research question of what roles do masculine and feminine values play in global marketing exchanges are three questions that guide the present research.

1. What are the main societal value systems that drive creation of value?
2. How is consumer behavior influenced by the value system adopted by their nation?
3. What changes may arise if a shift in value systems were to occur among large segments of consumers across the globe?

Constructs

Value Systems: Values are held by individuals as well as collectivities such as (sub)cultures, organizations, and nations (Hofstede 1979). Values are mutually related and form value systems or hierarchies. If an individual or group “holds” a value, this means that the issue involved resonates with them and that they identify some outcomes as “good” and others as “bad” (Hampden-Turner and Trompenaars 1993).

Hofstede and colleagues (1980; Hofstede and Bond 1988) catalogued five universal values of culture: power distance, uncertainty avoidance, masculinity/femininity, individualism/collectivism and Confucian dynamism. Hofstede’s research provides standardized indices that enable levels to be compared across countries. While Hofstede’s scales receive criticism for validity (Sondergaard 1994), the scales continue to be applied and referenced for consumer behavior and marketing research. The focus of the current study is on feminine and masculine values; therefore we suggest using Hofstede’s scales to measure the concepts of Masculinity/Femininity (MAS), Power Distance (PDI) and Individualism/Collectivism (IND). Hofstede’s concepts are well accepted and documented in the marketing literature this condensed paper will not expand on them.

Value Systems and Segmentation in the Global Marketplace

A recent study of value systems in the US catalogued three distinct segments within American society: Moderns (100 million people), Traditionals (50 million people), and a relatively new, emerging subculture of 50 million people, Cultural Creatives⁶ (Ray and Anderson 2000). There are an estimated 80-90 million Cultural Creatives in the European Union, which translates to approximately 30 to 35% of every Western European country. In addition, preliminary indications are that Asian countries are constructing their own version of cultural creativity (Moore 2001).

Each value system segment has different approaches to consumption. Moderns and Traditionals follow a masculine value system emphasizing sex-typed roles, individual achievement, status through accumulation of goods, and varying degrees of power distance. Cultural Creatives follow a feminine value system based on collective goals, sustainable global development, and low power distance among consumers and producers (Ray and Anderson 2000). Complete descriptions of each segment society are described by Ray and Anderson (2000).

Cultural Creatives and Consumption

The CC segment size is estimated at 50 million people in the US and 80-90 million in Europe. In the US the CC segment has an annual family income \$6,317 higher than the national average (Ray 1997). Cultural Creatives possess feminine values: they have great concern for life quality and relationships. These values indicate a shift in the cultural fabric for US consumers to a lower MAS and a lower PDI.

Cultural Creatives desire a quality of life, equity for producers and consumers; they do not strive for affluence in the form of goods and possessions. They do not care about the “status purchases” which are prevalent in Moderns’ high MAS cultures. Even though CC value uniqueness, authenticity, and care about personal growth, they care as much about others as they do about themselves, and they consider social networks and sustainable growth for future generations to be of utmost importance.

Proposed Study

We propose that as CC increase in number the cultural consumption fabric across the globe will change. Feminine values will replace masculine values, which will ultimately lead to more equity (lower power distance) among workers, consumers, and in the global society as a whole. Values of individual responsibility coupled with collective orientations will encourage consumers to choose products/services that nurture natural and human resources.

We suggest implementing a combination of quantitative survey research using Hofstede’s cultural dimensions and Ray and Anderson’s questionnaires with qualitative interviewing on select respondents whose responses indicate different values and different consumer segments. We suggest that administering the Hofstede cultural scales together with the Ray and Anderson questionnaire will reveal trends among national populations and major sub-cultures within the nations.

We recommend the use of feminist research methods. Following the women’s voice/experience feminism techniques (Bristor and Fischer 1993), we suggest the use of qualitative data collection which is reflexive in nature, rejects traditional hierarchical assumptions of knowledge, and acknowledges that the researchers’ own class, gender, and culture affect interpretation of results. One feminist method shown to meet the three criteria listed above is memory-work (Friend and Thompson 2000; Haug and Others 1987).

Specifically we propose the following:

- P1:* Nations with low (high) MAS index scores will have a large (small) segment of cultural creatives who will indicate desires for reduced (increased) consumption of goods/services and (not) emphasize sustainability and equity for consumers and producers as important product attributes.
- P2:* Nations with low (high) PDI index scores will have a large (small) segment of cultural creatives who will indicate desires for reduced (increased) consumption of goods/services and (not) emphasize sustainability and equity for consumers and producers as important product attributes.

⁶The present manuscript focuses on value systems in the US and the potential of the emerging segment to change the face of global competition.

P3: Nations with low IDV index scores will have a large (small) segment of cultural creatives who will indicate desires for reduced (increased) consumption of goods/services and (not) emphasize sustainability and equity for consumers and producers as important product attributes.

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Emotion and Service Evaluation: How Different Cultures Respond to Service Experiences

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Introduction

The increasing trend towards globalization/ internationalization of services (Bolton and Myers 2003; Cicic, Patterson, and Shoham 1999) has highlighted the need for researchers to examine the ways in which consumers from different cultures evaluate the service they receive and how this then affects their behavioral intentions towards the service provider. Many researchers adopt similar frameworks to those described in mono-cultural studies focusing on consumers' cognitive evaluation based on perceptions, expectations or both. Yet a considerable body of literature (Arnould and Price 1993; de Ruyter and Bloemer 1999; Mattila and Enz 2002; Menon and Dubé 2000) has emphasized the role of affect in service experiences and in consumer decision-making. Since the nature of feelings and emotions, and how these are expressed, is known to differ across cultures (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner 1997) it is likely that an examination of the role of affect will have implications for both the development of cross-cultural service quality measurement and services marketing theory.

This paper reports the findings of a two-stage study which examines whether consumers from different cultures evaluate services in the same or different way(s). Specifically, the relative role of affect and cognition is explored and the impact on behavioral intentions is assessed. The first stage of the research is based on focus group interviews comparing West African and U.K. respondents. By adapting Shaver et al's (1987) emotional prototyping model this aims to identify differences between cultures in emotions evoked in a single encounter and the subsequent impact on behavioral intentions. The second stage involves a survey of student banking services involving African, Chinese English and Scottish respondents. This assesses differences in service experiences and evaluations and the relative validity of scales, measuring service quality, satisfaction and affect/emotions, in predicting behavioral intentions.

The Focus Groups

The aim of the focus group discussions was to explore cross-cultural differences in consumers' emotional/affective responses to negative service encounters and how these then impact on future service-related behaviors. For each of the eight focus groups (four from each cultural grouping), eight participants were recruited as they attended registration for professional courses offered to both UK and